

**S.B. No. 417 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF PSYCHIATRIC AND  
SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT SERVICES.**

**My Name is Stephen Lee and I am a physician assistant practicing in both psychiatry and addiction medicine. I am also an assistant professor at Bay Path College teaching clinical medicine as well as a full-time doctoral student studying behavioral health. Therefore, this Bill directly linked to my profession and my training. After review of this provision, I believe this Bill is an important step to help pave the way for integrated behavioral health care.**

**Why is Behavioral Health Integration important?**

1. 60 – 70% of medical patients presenting to their PCP complain of physical symptoms with no objective findings noted by means of objective testing such as labwork, consults, or imaging (Cummings & Follette, 1968). It is noted that 60-80% of patients who suffer from anxiety or depression present with some kind of physical symptom (Boles, Pelletier, & Lynch, 2004). Why? Patients translating affective symptoms into somatic ones.
2. Increasing availability of rapid and effective psychotherapy reduces medical costs by at least 40% (Cummings & Follette, 1968; Jones & Vischi, 1979; Friedman, Sobel, Myers, Caudill, & Benson, 1995; Blount et al., 2007). Confirmed by NIMH research. Why? Somatizers increase medical cost an estimated 6 – 14 times!
3. Often treated for physical symptoms that involve multiple testing and consultations. Physicians and other providers often overlook behavioral problems at the root of physical symptoms (McGlynn et al., 2003). Furthermore, 90% of those patients referred out for psychotherapy refuse. Studies have demonstrated that 81% of somatizing patients will accept these services if in the primary care office (Cummings & Cummings, 2012).
4. Reduces cost and improves patient wellbeing by increasing the patient's adherence to treatment plans.
5. BHP works with patients to modify their unhealthy lifestyle. Proven to be helpful in:
  - a. DM
  - b. Chronic pain
  - c. Obesity
  - d. Hypertension
  - e. Medication compliance

**How can Integrated Care benefit patients, physicians, and medicine?**

1. *Patients:*
  - a. Have continuity of care with Behavioral Health Provider in their Primary Care Office that is familiar with their medical and behavioral problems.
  - b. Can return for treatment at any time (throughout one's lifecycle) which has shown to increase patient satisfaction and improve access.

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**Research demonstrates that utilizing behavioral health providers in primary care centers improves adherence to mental health treatment plans, improves patient outcomes with chronic disease, and reduces the use of medical resources. Therefore, I believe by passing a Bill that would allow primary care and behavioral health entities to combine their resources would generate improved care for the people of Connecticut. THANK YOU.**

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